

IMPROVING WELL-BEING

A G E N D A

- Starter
- Be a Health “Freak”
- Say Yes to Less Stress
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- Conclusion
- Questions for Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify good health and physical fitness as essential to self-esteem.
Students will identify stress factors in their lives, and explore ways to manage and reduce them.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “MyPlate” activity sheet (#4) for each student (Part I)
- One copy of the “Say Yes to Less Stress” activity sheet (#5) for each student (Part II)

Starter (3 minutes)

Give students the following directions:

- Raise your hand if you ate a cookie, drank soda, or ate a candy bar yesterday.
- Raise your hand if you stayed up late last night, regardless of the reason.
- Raise your hand if you get less than one hour of exercise a week. (Point out that exercise does not have to be a sport.)

Tell students that in this lesson they'll be learning how diet, exercise, and sleep affect their health, and they'll see how good health can make it easier for them to feel, think, and perform their best.

Part I Be a Health "Freak" (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students examine how healthy patterns of diet, exercise, and sleep can help them look and feel their best.

1. STUDENTS REVIEW IMPORTANT FOOD GROUPS AND THE NEED FOR A BALANCED DIET.

Distribute copies of the "MyPlate" activity sheet (#4) to each student. Explain that the food we eat affects our energy level and our ability to do things well. A balanced diet means eating different kinds of food in proper quantities. This food gives our body the nutrients it needs to work and grow. A balanced diet also helps us look our best; it keeps our skin healthy and makes our hair and bones stronger.

Briefly discuss each section of the chart and ask students to brainstorm a list of favorite foods from each group:

- Grains (like bread, cereal, rice, and pasta) are high in proteins and carbohydrates. They are important for creating energy. Notice how this section takes up a large portion of the plate.
- Vegetables and fruits are high in vitamins and nutrients that help fight infection and disease. Fruits are also a good source of energy. These two portions take up half of the plate, meaning that half of our meals should consist of fruits and vegetables.
- Sources of protein, such as meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts, should be a part of every meal, as they provide us with the building blocks of the body.
- The small cup represents dairy products, like low-fat yogurt or milk. We should include dairy products with our meals, as they give us calcium, which helps our bones and teeth grow strong. Those who are lactose intolerant can have lactose-free dairy or calcium-fortified soy milk.
- Oils, sweets, and unhealthy fats (which aren't even shown on the plate) are foods to eat sparingly; these foods include potato chips, French fries, fried chicken, cookies, and soda. Fats and oils can clog our arteries and affect the way our heart functions. Sweets have no nutritional value and can cause health problems.

By a show of hands for each food group, poll students to see if they are eating appropriate amounts from each group. Discuss ways to change eating habits, such as eating fewer sweets, eating more fruit, eating three small meals a day, and having healthy snacks between meals.

2. STUDENTS EXAMINE HOW FOOD AFFECTS SELF-ESTEEM.

Ask students to finish each sentence:

- When I eat too much candy, I feel ____ (*heavy, tired*).
- When I feel that way, I have a ____ (*hard*) time getting things done.
- When that happens, I feel ____ (*bad*) about myself.
- When I eat a balanced diet, I feel ____ (*good, energetic, strong*).
- When I feel that way, I have a(n) ____ (*easy*) time getting things done.
- When that happens, I feel ____ (*good*) about myself.

Have students write their own series of sentences like the ones above to show how food affects their self-esteem. Encourage them to share their thoughts with partners.

3. STUDENTS REVIEW THE NEED FOR EXERCISE.

Explain that exercise increases energy. It increases the flow of oxygen to the brain, which stimulates the mind and body. It strengthens our muscles, bones, and other tissues and organs.

Tell students to brainstorm a list of physical activities that they enjoy. Write responses on the board.

Have students stand and stretch. Lead them in some bending and stretching exercises to get their oxygen flowing. Invite volunteers to share some exercises they know and lead the class in them.

4. STUDENTS EXAMINE HOW EXERCISE AFFECTS SELF-ESTEEM.

Have students work in pairs to role-play a scene between a healthy person and a couch potato. Each healthy person must try to convince his or her couch-potato friend that exercise will improve his or her life. Tell the healthy people that they have three minutes to provide their friends with at least three compelling reasons why exercise will bolster their self-confidence. They should then switch roles and repeat the procedure. When students have finished, ask:

- How many couch potatoes were convinced to change their ways? What was said that convinced you to change?
- How many couch potatoes held firm to the couch? What, for you, are the benefits of being a couch potato?

Point out that exercise also relieves the body of tension and stress. Ask students if they have ever noticed that going out and doing something helps them feel better when they're angry or upset. Remind students that getting a good night's sleep (seven to 10 hours) also helps them to become more productive by relaxing the mind and body.

Part II Say Yes to Less Stress (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify stress factors in their lives, and explore ways to manage and reduce that stress.

1. STUDENTS DISCUSS COMMON SOURCES AND SIGNALS OF STRESS.

Explain that stress is tension, or a feeling of pressure or anxiety. Stress occurs when you feel out of control or under a lot of pressure, and it affects how you respond to people or situations. Ask students to provide an example of an event that causes them to feel stress, either at school, at home, on the job (if they have one), with their friends, or in the community.

Have a volunteer write student responses on the board.

Tell students to describe how they know that they're feeling stress. Ask:

- Does your body send you signals? (*Students may mention common signals, such as back, neck, or stomach pains.*)
- Does your mind send you signals? How do your feelings or emotions change? (*Students may suggest that they get angry or frustrated.*)
- How does your behavior change? (*Some may retreat inside themselves and become quiet. Others may show anxiety by talking too loudly or quickly.*)

Point out that you can't always control the events in your life, but you can control your behavior.

2. STUDENTS EXPLORE WAYS TO RESPOND TO STRESSFUL SITUATIONS.

Discuss the following scenarios:

- You have a test at school. What are three things you can do to feel confident instead of anxious? (*Students may answer: study hard, be prepared, get a good night's sleep.*)
- You're coming home late from work. You feel unsafe on the street where you are walking. What can you do to make yourself feel less anxious? (*Students may say: walk under street lights or where people can see you, carry a whistle or something that makes noise, plan to walk with someone rather than alone, take a longer but safer route to get home.*)

Distribute one copy of the "Say Yes to Less Stress" activity sheet (#5) to each student. Allow students five minutes to complete this activity sheet.

When students have finished, have them discuss how they try to reduce stress in their lives. Encourage students to offer helpful suggestions to one another about techniques that work for them. Invite volunteers who are familiar with breathing strategies, for example, to lead the class in some exercises. Other students may have expertise in yoga, relaxation, meditation, or cultural traditions that they can share.

Part III A Day at the Health Club (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students plan a healthy routine of diet, exercise, and sleep, including some strategies to foster less stress.

1. STUDENTS APPLY WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED BY PLANNING A “DAY AT THE HEALTH CLUB.”

Divide the class into groups of five or six. Explain that each group is going to plan a pretend “day at the health club” for the class. The plan must include the following:

- A menu for breakfast, lunch, and dinner that is healthy and nutritious, and has the proper quantities of all the food groups for each meal
- A schedule of daily exercise, including sports, workouts, and walks
- A separate schedule of lectures and classes on stress-reduction techniques, including breathing strategies, relaxation, meditation, yoga, and cultural traditions

Allow 10 minutes for students to prepare the plan.

2. STUDENTS SHARE THEIR PLANS.

Allow each group to share its plan with the class. Have the class evaluate the plans and determine the one that would be most healthy. Explain to students that while it is unlikely that they will be able to incorporate all of the “health club” activities in their daily lives, they should make an effort to include some.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to summarize the ways diet, exercise, and stress reduction impact their lives. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- When you are healthy, you look, feel, think, and do your best.
- The food you eat affects your energy and your health.
- Exercise increases your energy. It strengthens your body and relieves tension and stress.
- Healthy, well-rested people are better prepared to deal with stress.
- Often, we can control the amount of stress in our lives by determining how to respond to stressful situations.

Questions for Assessment

1. Create a menu for a healthy, well-balanced meal.
2. List three benefits of regular exercise.
3. List three techniques for reducing stress.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Extension: Using Quotations

Quote: “Remember to create a code of behavior to guide your actions toward a healthy lifestyle.” –Glenn Van Ekeren

Activity: Have students create an outline to healthy living that is possible for them to follow. Discuss the elements of healthy living.

Extension: Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Activity: Explain to students that stress reduction techniques that are effective for one person may not work for another. Have students research various techniques and identify three each that they feel might be useful to them. Have each student share one technique and create a summary list to share with the class.

Extension: Writing in Your Journal

Activity: Challenge students to keep a record of the times they feel stressed throughout the week. Have them write down what made them stressed and how they dealt with the stress.

After one week, have students report the results of their stress records to the class.

Extension: Using Technology

Activity: Have students visit <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate-Daily-Checklist-input>. Tell them to fill out the form that appears to receive a daily food plan that is customized for their height and weight.

Have students print their plans. As a class, discuss ways and make a commitment to follow the plans.

Extension: Homework

Activity: Have students choose four foods in their homes and estimate the nutrition information of each (e.g., calories, fat, protein). Have them look at the panel on the side or back and see if the foods were as nutritious as they thought.

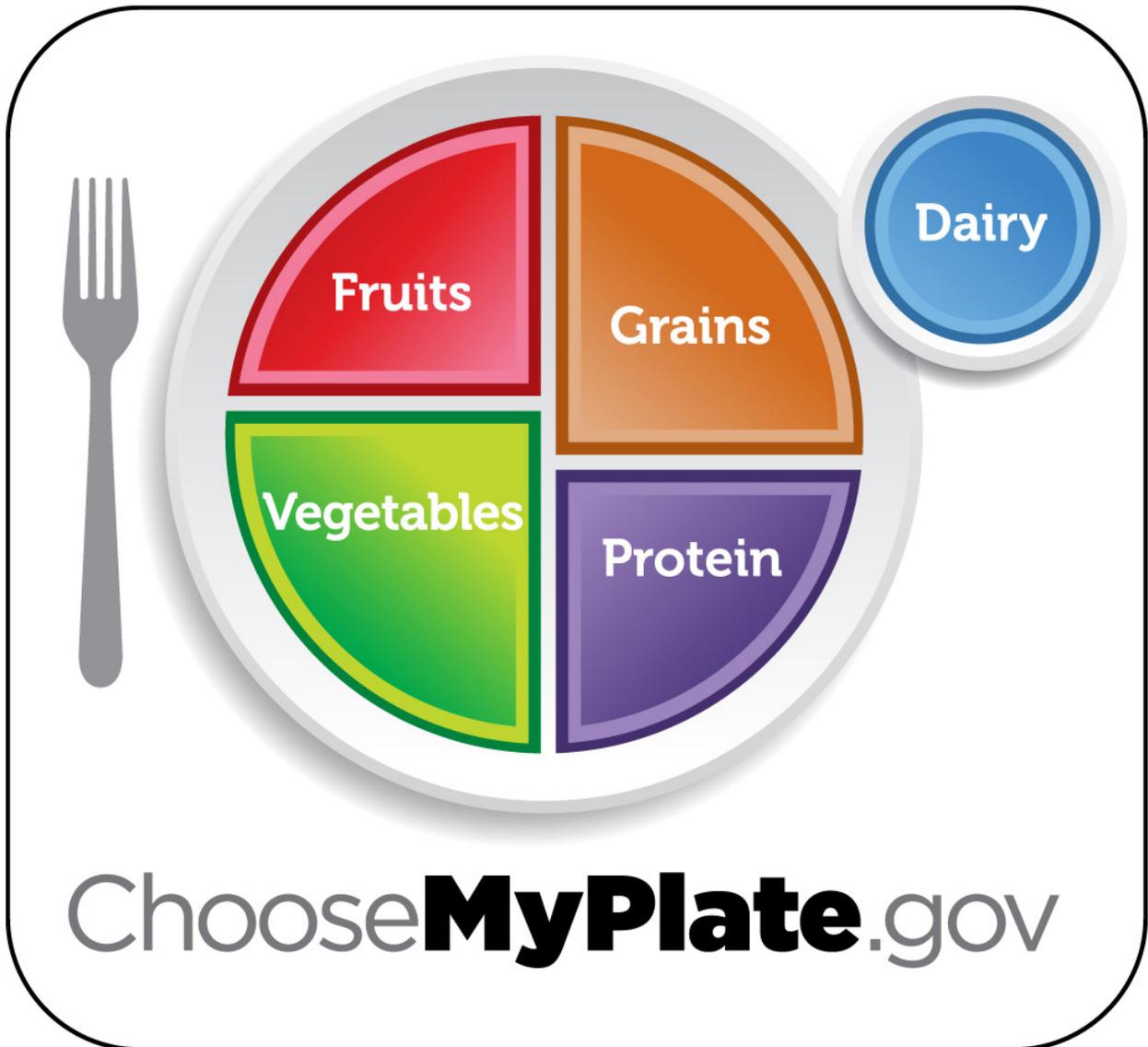
Have students report their findings to the class.

Extension: Additional Resources

Activity: Show a yoga or exercise video to the class. Have students follow along, if possible.

Discuss with students how the yoga or exercise made them feel (or could make them feel).

MYPLATE



SAY YES TO LESS STRESS

THE SOURCE	THE SIGNAL	I SAY YES TO LESS STRESS BY—
1.		a.
2.		b.
3.		c.
4.		d.
5.		e.